

importance of evaluating effectiveness as well as efficacy, genetic disorders and testing, telehealth and international pediatric psychology are all reviewed.

Despite its overall strengths, a few drawbacks should be mentioned. By necessity, chapters were limited in length. As is the case with all compendiums, there is some unevenness and overlap. Canadian readers will find that the sections on ethics and inequities in health care are excellent, but are taken from the point of view of practitioners in the United States. Less than 10% of the references were from articles published within five years of this book's printing, making them somewhat out of date. In particular, the general medical overviews, though helpful, suffered as a result. Some terms were named incorrectly (Down syndrome, FAS not FAE). Finally, the chapter on ADHD was disappointing and a major flaw, given the importance of this topic.

Nevertheless, this handbook is an excellent resource and a comprehensive but engaging read.

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Deviant Peer Influences in Programs for Youth (Problems and Solutions)

Dodge, K. A., Dishion, T. J. and Lansford, J. E. (Editors), The Guildford Press: New York, 2006, 462 pp. US \$49.00 hardcover, US \$26.00 softcover.

This is the fourth volume in the Duke Series in Child Development and Public Policy and, as outlined by the editors, follows previous works that have dealt with delinquent and aggressive behavior in girls, attachment relationships between parents and infants, and the state of African American families in the 21st century.

This edition deals with a topic no less arduous or important. It is that of deviant peer influence that paradoxically emboldens, models and adversely influences children and adolescents while attending programs meant to do just the opposite. No social scientist, psychiatrist, psychologist or youth counselor would deny that youth with conduct disorder carry the threat of contagion into the classroom, hospital or secure facility. This belief is generally held as

a sort of cultural myth by those who work with youth - a kind of professionally held archetype - made the more comfortable by its common belief. But from whence has this knowledge come? For those committed to the difficult task of dealing validly with delinquent youth, this book offers the academic underpinning that answers many of their questions. And for those worried about deviant peer influences, here is the evidence-based foundation for action in the field.

The editors form the organizing phalanx for twenty-eight esteemed contributors who are experts in their fields of Epidemiology, Law, Psychology, Education and Public Policy, specifically as they relate to youth and their group interactions. These contributors bring academic rigor to bear on what surely must be all important and pertinent bibliographies of their topics. With methodical persistence, each applies expertise to available literature and pushes with slow relentlessness towards conclusion. And for the dedicated reader (and with due effort applied) their theses take on fresh nuance and validity.

Their references are myriad. For example, youth with an aggressive history are more susceptible to aggressive contagion in the classroom (Kellum, et al, 1998, Chapter 4); adult monitoring is important to decrease deviant peer influence (Dishion and Dodge, Chapter 2); school retention has failed to show consistent advantage in achievement or motivation (Jimerson, 2001; Jimerson & Kaufman, 2003, Chapter 7); children placed in "individualized" foster care have better outcomes than those placed in group-care settings (Barber, 2001, Chapter 11); and programs meant to have deviant youth "scared straight" have, in fact, produced a measurable negative effect (Lewis, 1983, Chapter 6), with this information, sadly, not being considered while striking public policy in this decade (Sherman & Strang, 2004, Chapter 6).

As with all texts based on a collection of co-contributors, there is a challenge to have the book move forward, as with the purpose and pleasure of a swiftly read, cohesive "story". The editors do their best. With a straightforward and plainly understood Introduction and Table of Contents, they herald and outline purpose and theme to a difficult collection of

diligent and academically rigorous essays. (These are, after all, works that use meta-analysis, complex terminology, and even algebraic formulae to corral and explain the phenomenon of deviant peer influences).

In Chapter 13, Malcolm W. Klien - as if fortified by years of experience - departs from the usual academic format of this book and risks personal narrative. He concludes his essay on street gangs with his visit to a rose garden in Los Angeles in 2003 where a new youth rehabilitation centre had been established. He reflects, "The local correctional halfway house had come to the rose garden.... And as I walked up and out of the garden, I noticed what I had overlooked on the way in-gang graffiti along the walls. No roses there." For Klien, this ironic juxtaposition is conveyed with a sentiment of disappointment; but, between the lines, there seems from him a palpable wish for something better. Captured in his story, surely, is the sentiment that drives all the contributors of this book.

The first and final chapters are written by the editors and here (especially in the last) are the full efforts of their formulation. Stretched before them were the eighteen essays of their peers - essays that had each inhaled and exhaled just once upon the page. Invited forward, the editors must have been somewhat daunted by the mass of material that lay in front of them. But they have done a credible job of synthesis and conclusion; and they offer a series of findings: *peer contagion occurs naturally; aggregating deviant peers, although cost saving initially, is ineffective, perhaps harmful, and in the end, costly to society; youth should receive individual treatment while remaining in normative peer groups; group treatments are less effective, and collections of deviant peers erode treatment effects, but factors that affect*

outcome are subtle, and variant; and by variance and subtlety, outcomes can be affected. These factors include age, gender, degree of deviance, time in group, time to interact outside of group, ratio of deviant to non-deviant group members, group structure, leadership expertise, and cultural context. And the editors are not shy about their recommendations; indeed, they offer for public policy makers 38 programs and policies in Education, Juvenile Justice, Mental Health and Community Programming *that should be avoided.* And they offer "*viable alternatives*" to aggregating deviant peers - *some 42 in total.*

Public policy makers might be tempted to rush to the final pages of Chapter 20 so as to obtain direction. (In fact, the authors offer a condensed pamphlet for public policy makers just so inclined - as a sort of primer for the overwhelmed and busy, *Series Editors' Note*, page x). But, keeping in mind the lessons of past public policy (dubiously informed by assumption), this text is an invitation to scholarship when completely read, and it offers the so-inclined a full and complete foundation for valid programming.

The book should be oblivious to picayune criticism, if for nothing else, based solely on the fortitude of its scholarly recommendations. If this text is short on humor, it is pardoned by its ferocious adherence to duty; if it lacks the soft appeal of a gripping personal story, it compensates by serious regard to previous inane and damaging presumptions; and if it slows under the rigors of methodical scholarship, it offers itself as a base and anchor for further action and study. It is, as most monumental works are, difficult, sometimes laborious, but extremely important.

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